

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CAIRO 11899 241657Z

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ACTION SS-14

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FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8131

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 11899

LIMDIS

FOR DEPUTY UNDER SECRETARY EAGLEBURGER FROM AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: AFSI OGEN EG
SUBJECT: RELOCATION OF FSI ARABIC LANGUAGE PROGRAM TO CAIRO

REF STATE 277400

1. I APPRECIATE YOUR MESSAGE AND WAS SURE I COULD COUNT ON YOUR SUPPORT. AS REPORTED CAIRO 11883, I TALKED WITH BYRD YESTERDAY AND HE WAS GENERALLY POSITIVE. HE THINKS THE PROBLEM CAN BE HANDLED AND IS CERTAINLY WILLING TO TRY. HIS MAIN CONCERN IS THE AUC BOARD. IF WE DECIDE TO GO AHEAD, WE WILL HAVE TO WORK ON IT IN CONJUNCTION WITH BYRD HIMSELF. IF THEY WANT USG MONEY, IT SEEMS TO ME THEY HAVE AN OBLIGATION TO BE OF ASSISTANCE TO US WHEREVER POSSIBLE.

2. I CONSIDER SOLLENBERGER QUITE REASONABLE ON THIS MATTER, BUT AM CONCERNED ABOUT SMITH AND WHAT I HEAR OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDES. I CANNOT AFFORD A GAGGLE OF FRACTIOUS STUDENTS COMING TO CAIRO TRYING TO DICTATE HOW THINGS SHOULD BE RUN AND COMPLAINING WHEN THEIR WISHES CANNOT BE MET. IF ESTABLISHED HERE, SUCH A PROGRAM WILL IN DUE COURSE SETTLE DOWN TO SOME SEMBLANCE OF NORMALITY,

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BUT FIRST TWO YEARS OR SO WILL UNDOUBTEDLY

BE A BIT ROUGH. THEY HAVE BEEN FOR US HERE AT THE POST BUT I HAVE BEEN FORTUNATE TO HAVE A STAFF WHICH HAS RESPONDED MAGNIFICENTLY TO THE CHALLENGE WITHOUT COMPLAINT.

3. THE PRINCIPAL STUMBLING BLOCKS TO EXPEDITIOUS FURTHER EXPLORATIONS WITH AUC IS BYRD'S UPCOMING ABSENCE AND HIS VIEW THAT THE TIME IS NOT RIGHT FOR SOLLENBERGER TO COME. IN ADDITION, IT IS BYRD'S BELIEF THAT HE CANNOT PRESENT THE MATTER UNTIL THE FEBRUARY 1976 BOARD MEETING. THAT MEANS THE SITUATION STAYS IN LIMBO UNTIL THEN AND THERE MAY WELL BE REASONS JUSTIFYING AN EARLIER DECISION.

4. LIKE YOU, I AM RELUCTANTLY BEING FORCED TO THE CONCLUSION THAT A WASHINGTON LOCATION MAY ON BALANCE BE THE QUICKEST AND EASIEST WAY TO RESOLVE THE PROBLEM. HOWEVER, DEPENDING ON WASHINGTON'S VIEWS, I AM QUITE PREPARED TO CONTINUE THE EFFORTS I HAVE ALREADY BEGUN WITH AUC. I FEEL REASONABLE CONFIDENT THAT SOMETHING CAN ULTIMATELY BE WORKED OUT HERE, BUT IT MAY TAKE A BIT OF TIME.

5. AGAIN, MANY THANKS FOR YOUR SUPPORT.

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